

REMARKS

By the present amendment, independent claims 1, 3, 8 and 10 have been amended to obviate the examiner's objections thereto and/or to further clarify the concepts of the present invention. In addition, claims 2, 4, 9 and 11 have been canceled.

Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 8 may be found in the disclosure at line 7, page 6 to line 9, page 12 (particularly, line 13, page 7 to line 21, page 9) of the subject specification. Support for the amendments to claims 3 and 10 may be found in the disclosure at line 10, page 12 to line 16, page 17 (particularly, line 15, page 13 to line 20) of the subject specification.

It is submitted that these amendments to the claims are helpful in distinguishing the subject claims over the cited prior art and do not raise new issues which would require further consideration and/or search. In addition, it is submitted that such amendments place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal. Furthermore, no additional claims are presented without cancelling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims. In view of the above, it is submitted that entry of the above amendments is in order and such is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4 and 8-11 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '120 Japanese patent publication to Hirofumi et al in view of the newly cited patent to Craig. In making this rejection, it was asserted that the cited

Japanese patent publication teaches a reflow soldering apparatus as set forth in the noted claims. However, it was acknowledged that the publication does not teach, among other things, the adjacent fans being overlapped as seen vertically from a direction perpendicular to the transport line of the conveyor. The Craig patent was then asserted to supply this deficiency. Reconsideration of this rejection in view of the above claim amendments and the following comments is respectfully requested.

As acknowledged in the Action, the Hirofumi et al publication does not teach or suggest the subject matter of amended claims 1-4 and 8-11. Among other things, the Hirofumi et al publication discloses that the fans 6, 8 and 11 are arrayed offset up and down. Furthermore, adjacent fans 6, 8 and 11 are not overlapped as seen vertically from a direction perpendicular to the transport line of the conveyor 2. Additionally, the Hirofumi et al publication does not disclose a configuration of a blowing means, a first casing member and a second casing member as defined by amended claims 1, 3, 8 and 10.

Accordingly, it is apparent that the Hirofumi et al publication does not teach or suggest the reflow soldering apparatus as defined by claims 1, 3, 8 and 10 as amended.

It further is submitted that the Craig patent does not supply the teaching deficiencies of Hirofumi et al publication. The Craig patent simply discloses a configuration of trays for packaging articles. Among other things, the Craig patent is not directed to a reflow soldering apparatus, as are the present claims, and in particular does not teach a configuration of a blowing means, a first casing member and a second casing member as

now defined in amended claims 1, 3, 8 and 10. It is apparent that the Craig patent, alone or in combination with the Hirofumi et al publication, does not teach or suggest the reflow soldering apparatus as defined by claims 1, 3, 8 and 10 as amended.

For the reasons stated above, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of claims 1, 3, 8 and 10 as amended over the cited Hirofumi et al publication and the Craig patent are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the previously cited Okuno et al patent in view of the newly cited patent to Craig. Reconsideration of this rejection in view of the above claim amendments and the following comments is respectfully requested.

It is submitted that the apparatus as defined by amended claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the disclosure of the Okuno et al patent. More particularly, the Okuno et al patent discloses that the centers of the impellers in the adjacent fans 17 are on a single perpendicular plane along a transport line of the conveyor 2. Among other things, the Okuno et al patent does not teach the centers of the impellers in the adjacent fans 17 are offset to the left and right. Furthermore, the Okuno et al patent does not teach the adjacent fans 17 being positioned to overlap as seen horizontally from a direction perpendicular to the transport line of the conveyor. Additionally, the patent to Okuno et al does not disclose a configuration of a blowing means, a first casing member and a second casing member of amended claims 1, 3, 8 and 10.

Accordingly, from the above, it is readily apparent that the Okuno et al patent does not teach or suggest reflow soldering apparatus as defined by claims 1, 3, 8 and 10 as amended.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of claims 1, 3, 8 and 10 as amended over the cited Okuno et al and Craig patents are respectfully requested.

Claims 4 and 11 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '120 Japanese patent publication to Hirofumi et al in view of the newly cited patent to Craig further in view of the patent to Okuno et al cited above. Reconsideration of this rejection in view of the above claim amendments is requested.

As noted previously, claims 4 and 11 have been canceled. Thus, the rejection is moot and, accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the subject application is now in condition for allowance and early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, the undersigned hereby petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension may be charged to Deposit

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Account No. 01-2340, along with any other additional fees which may be required with respect to this paper.

Respectfully submitted,

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